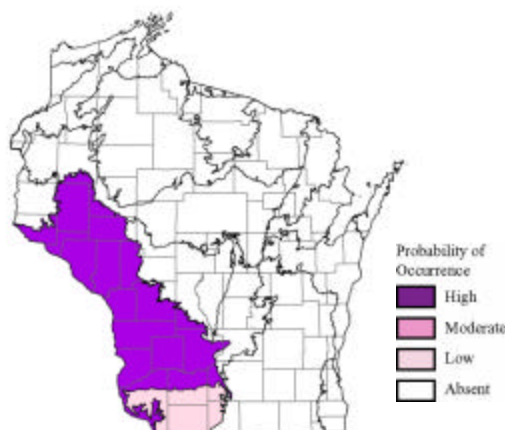


## Black Rat Snake (*Elaphe obsoleta*)

### Species Assessment Scores\*

State rarity:	4
State threats:	3
State population trend:	4
Global abundance:	3
Global distribution:	3
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	3
Mean Risk Score:	3.3
Area of importance:	2

\* Please see the [Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries \(Section 3.1.1\)](#) for definitions of criteria and scores.



### Ecological Landscape Associations

Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

### Landscape-community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Western Coulee and Ridges	Cedar glade
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry cliff
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry-mesic prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Floodplain forest
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak opening
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak woodland
Western Coulee and Ridges	Pine relict
Western Coulee and Ridges	Southern dry forest
Western Coulee and Ridges	Southern dry-mesic forest
Western Coulee and Ridges	Southern mesic forest

### Threats and Issues

- Development in bluffland areas is a threat to this species.
- Farming has significantly altered or reduced available habitat.
- The lack of habitat management has allowed natural succession to shrink or eliminate essential open-canopy habitat. This is less of an issue for this arboreal species than for the prairie-dependent snakes, but may be a factor specific to den site suitability at the northern edge of its range in Wisconsin.
- Invasive plants may threaten rodent populations in the future if habitat simplification continues on prairies and woodlands (e.g., garlic mustard), thereby limiting snake carrying capacity.
- Road mortality appeared to be a more significant factor historically (30-60 years ago) and may be more limited today due to lower population levels.

**Priority Conservation Actions**

- Reduce woody growth in overwintering habitats (southerly-exposed bluff faces with rock outcroppings that support or supported a prairie understory).
- Continue and increase efforts to control problematic invasives.
- Conduct rare snake workshops for landowners for the five prairie-dependent snakes.
- Solicit the involvement of universities and colleges to accomplish research needs.
- Long term monitoring is needed to evaluate population status and track trends of representative populations.
- Implement a cost share program for bluff prairie restoration and management.
- Partnering with prairie restoration groups like The Prairie Enthusiasts will help accomplish management more efficiently.